

this community Harold has never said no. In fact, I first got to know Harold through his fine work with the child and family services organization.

Harold has also been an active leader in our Republican Party. For as long as anyone can remember he has been at the helm of the Republican Party in the Sixth District serving as its Chair, and at convention after convention, whether it be on the local, State, or national level, Harold has exhibited the kind of leadership that is both admired as well as respected.

But his efforts are about a lot more than just working for today. One of the indelible images of Harold that sticks out in everyone's mind is him holding his 2-year-old grandson Jordan at every event, the get-togethers, Harold brings his grandson Jordan. He starts early showing the next generation what leadership and service and dedication are all about, and he also helps to remind us what we are working for as well here in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Harold for all his efforts. I would also like to thank a special woman in his life and for everyone's life for that matter, Zoe, for her dedication. Thanks, Harold. The whole community joins me in thanking you for your fine work. You have made a difference for all of us.

□ 1700

THE PROBLEM OF CAMPAIGN FINANCES IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the problem of campaign finances in this country. Today is a good day to be talking about this subject, because we have an agreement, a budget agreement, entered into by the President and by the Republican leadership, and that budget agreement and tax agreement has drawn strong support across the aisles today.

The problem I want to discuss today is an area where we also have some bipartisan agreement. I have been the co-chair of a freshman task force with the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. ASA HUTCHINSON. This freshman task force has spent 5 months working on the issue of campaign finance reform. I want to speak a few words about the problem, and then describe a little bit what we have been going through.

All of the freshmen went through the experience in 1996 of going through a different kind of an election, an election where there was a vast amount of money spent in our races to influence our races, either by the national parties or by outside groups that were not connected with our campaigns. So in many ways, we felt as if we did not have the same kind of role in the cam-

paign that candidates had had in the past. In short, there was too much money in politics. Soft money was a big part of the problem. Soft money is the \$100,000, the \$500,000, the \$1 million contributions that go to national parties for so-called party-building activities.

A long time ago, when this provision was created, the thought was that this money would go to help get out the vote, to help build the party organizations. In 1996 we saw that money flowing down into districts around the country to be used for negative advertisements. That simply has to stop, because every individual contributor, every voter, every citizen is diminished when that kind of big money contribution is part of the political process.

Our task force that I cochaired with the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. ASA HUTCHINSON, worked for 5 months on this particular issue. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. ALLEN BOYD, the gentleman from California, Ms. ELLEN TAUSCHER, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. BILL PASCRELL, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. NICK LAMPSON, and the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. RON KIND, were members of that task force.

We learned together. We held hearings. We had participants, groups that had made contributions, that had run ads, come in and testify. We had advocates for all sorts of change come in and testify. We went through a 5-month process to try to work out on a bipartisan basis what would be the kind of campaign reform that would be significant reform but would also be practical, that could be passed this particular year.

We have a bill. It is the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1997. I am proud to be an original sponsor of that bill. It does three particularly important things. First, it bans soft money. It takes the biggest of the big money out of politics. Second, it provides that those groups that want to advertise will have to undergo a further disclosure than they have in the past. They will have to identify who the group is and they will have to identify what they are spending their money on, if they spend more than \$25,000 in a district, or an aggregate of \$100,000 around the country. Third, we will have faster reporting by candidates of their contributions, and electronic reporting in many cases, and more disclosure than we have had in the past.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ALLEN. I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say to my friend, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] that it has been a pleasure to work with him on this task force. I think he has done an outstanding job with his colleagues. I want to commend him for his work on this. I will say more later, but I just wanted to say what a joy it has been to work in a bipartisan fashion with the gentleman and his colleagues.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. We have had a good time. We have learned a lot. We have learned that, among other things, a group of freshmen new to this Chamber can come into this Chamber and learn to work together across the aisles. The gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] has been an extraordinary leader in this endeavor, and other members, Republican members of the task force, have really done an outstanding job.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to address a couple of things, in addition. We have critics. No surprise. There are always critics. There are those who say we have not gone far enough. They want candidate limits or they want public financing.

To them I say whatever their agenda, however important further reform may be, the fact is that if we are going to act this year, we have to ban soft money. We have to take the biggest of the big money out of politics. There may be unfinished business for other times, but at least we must do that much.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF THE BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise in support of the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act. I like that name, because that is what we need to have in our campaign system these days is simple integrity.

About 6 months ago, as my friend, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] indicated, a group of Members, we called it the Bipartisan Freshman Task Force, met together, six freshman Republicans, six freshman Democrats, and we called it, I called it an experiment in bipartisanship to see if we could really work together to accomplish something, to accomplish the job people sent us here to do.

We worked together. We held hearings. We listened to each other. We decided what we could agree upon. As the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] suggested, we set aside the extremes and said what could we do for the American people that would improve our system. We focused ourselves on one primary concern, and that was the huge problem of soft money that runs in our system today.

I think the issue that faces the U.S. Congress this year, in 1997, is can we, do we have the courage, to do something about the problem with soft money. That is the overriding issue. I hope that the answer is a resounding yes. I have been encouraged recently by what I have heard from leaders from both sides of the aisle, from the public, and I dearly hope we can do that this session of Congress.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that has come up is why are freshmen seeming to have such an early impact on this race. I am a Democrat from Arkansas, a freshman, and the gentleman is a Republican from Arkansas, and it seemed to me that the ugly races were ones for open seats. Both the gentleman and I from Arkansas had different political perspectives, but it was ugly because of the presence of soft money.

I loved the line the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] used, getting rid of the biggest of the big money. These are not the \$1,000 donations we are talking about, but the \$50,000 or \$100,000 to the party that have so distorted the system. I commend the gentleman and the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] for his work. It truly is a bipartisan effort. I thank the gentleman for his effort.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I certainly concur that this has been a good effort we put forth. The gentleman and I had an opportunity in Arkansas when he was in the General Assembly, we worked in separate parties on election reform in Arkansas, and I am delighted we can set the example here in our Nation's Capital, and I hope we can have the same success as well.

If Members look at this bill, and my friend, the gentleman from Maine, described the elements of this bill, it focuses on soft money. It bans soft money, and any serious reform has to start with that. But it also increases disclosure.

I believe we need to provide information to the American public so they will know who is spending what in a campaign, and that they can find out that information in a timely fashion. That is what our bill does this year. It does those two things.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, our bill, besides providing a ban on soft money and increasing disclosure, I think it is unique because it is a product of bipartisanship, and because it has come through in that fashion I believe it has the best chance for success this year.

I believe that the timing is right, and that momentum is gathering for campaign finance reform for a couple of reasons. First of all, the Senate hearings have focused the American public's attention on the problem of soft money. I hope that the American public who is listening today, that they will write in, that they will encourage their Congressmen to address this serious issue.

Second, I have been encouraged by the response of leaders from both sides of the aisle, with a growing sense that we need to do something about this. The gentleman from California, Mr. BILL THOMAS, chairman of the Committee on House Oversight that will have the hearings on campaign finance has indicated a willingness to hold hearings. I commend him for that. He is a critical part of this effort, and I hope

we can have those hearings this fall so we can move this legislation forward.

Finally, we have had encouragement even from leaders like the gentleman from Texas, Mr. DICK ARMEY, who has indicated that the freshmen are going in the right direction, that he is anxious to hear more details about this plan, and I was delighted to hear this.

Most importantly, the encouragement comes from the voters, from letters from constituents who say their voice is being diminished by the vastness, the millions of dollars in corporate and labor money that flows to the parties. They say, where is our voice? Where is the voice of the average voter, the voter out there who works day in and day out, the contributor, the small contributor to a campaign?

I was delighted also that this last week we had encouragement from very significant leaders from both parties. Former President George Bush, former President Jimmy Carter, and former President Gerald Ford all indicated support for campaign finance reform.

I like what former President George Bush said in his letter of June 19, 1997. He said, "We must encourage the broadest possible participation by individuals in financing elections. Whatever reform is enacted should go the extra mile in demanding fullest possible disclosure for all campaign contributions."

"I would favor getting rid of so-called 'soft money' contributions but this principle should be applied to all groups including Labor."

Speaking from this side of the aisle, I certainly believe that the soft money ban should include not only corporations but also labor. It does that. It does that, because that is the ban that is needed. It is equal and fair to all sides.

Mr. Speaker, I will enter the three letters from the former Presidents into the RECORD.

The letters referred to are as follows.

JULY 10, 1997.

Hon. NANCY KASSEBAUM BAKER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KASSEBAUM: Our system in financing federal election campaigns is in serious trouble. To remedy these failings requires prompt action by the President and the House and Senate. I strongly hope the Congress in cooperation with the White House will enact Campaign Reform legislation by the forthcoming elections in 1998.

Public officials and concerned citizens. Republicans and Democrats alike, have already identified important areas of agreement. These include (1) the need to end huge uncontrolled "soft money" contributions to the national parties and their campaign committees, and to bar solicitation of "soft money" from all persons, parties and organized labor by federal officeholders and candidates for any political organizations; (2) the need to provide rapid and comprehensive disclosure of contributions and expenditures in support of, or opposition to, candidates for federal office, and (3) the need to repair the system of campaign finance law enforcement by assuring that it is effective and independent of politics.

A significant bi-partisan effort across party lines can achieve a legislative consen-

sus in campaign reforms that will help to restore the confidence of our citizens in their federal government.

I commend you and former Vice President Mondale for your leadership on behalf of campaign reform.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD.

JULY 17, 1997

Hon. WALTER MONDALE,
Minneapolis, MN.

TO VICE PRESIDENT WALTER MONDALE: I am pleased to join former Presidents Bush and Ford in expressing hope that this Congress will enact meaningful campaign finance reform legislation. For the future of our democracy, and as our experience may be emulated by other nations, prompt and fundamental repair of our system for financing federal elections is required.

The most basic and immediate step should include an end to "soft money," whether in the form of corporate or union treasury contributions to federal campaign, or large and unregulated contributions from individuals. The initial step should also include measures that provide for complete and immediate disclosures of political contributions and expenses.

To accomplish these and other needed reforms and to lay the basis for future ones, we also need to develop a strong national consensus about the objectives of reform. It will take more than just the action of this Congress, but fundamental reform is essential to the task of repairing public trust in government and in our leaders. We must take significant steps to assure voters that public policy is determined by the exercise of their franchise rather than a broken and suspect campaign finance system.

Please extend to Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker my appreciation for the work that she has undertaken with you to advance the essential cause of bipartisan campaign finance reform.

Sincerely,

JIMMY CARTER.

JUNE 19, 1997.

Senator NANCY KASSEBAUM BAKER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KASSEBAUM, First let me commend you and the former Vice President, Ambassador Mondale, for taking a leadership role in trying to bring about campaign reform.

I hope the current Congress will enact Campaign Reform legislation.

We must encourage the broadest possible participation by individuals in financing elections. Whatever reform is enacted should go the extra mile in demanding fullest possible disclosure of all campaign contributions.

I would favor getting rid of so called "soft money" contributions but this principle should be applied to all groups including Labor.

I congratulate you for working for better campaign finance law enforcement.

With my respects to you and Vice President Mondale I am, sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH.

URGING COLLEAGUES TO JOIN IN SUPPORT OF BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KIND] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, this is truly an historic day in our Nation's history.